

PR
6043
V719i

Images and Impressions

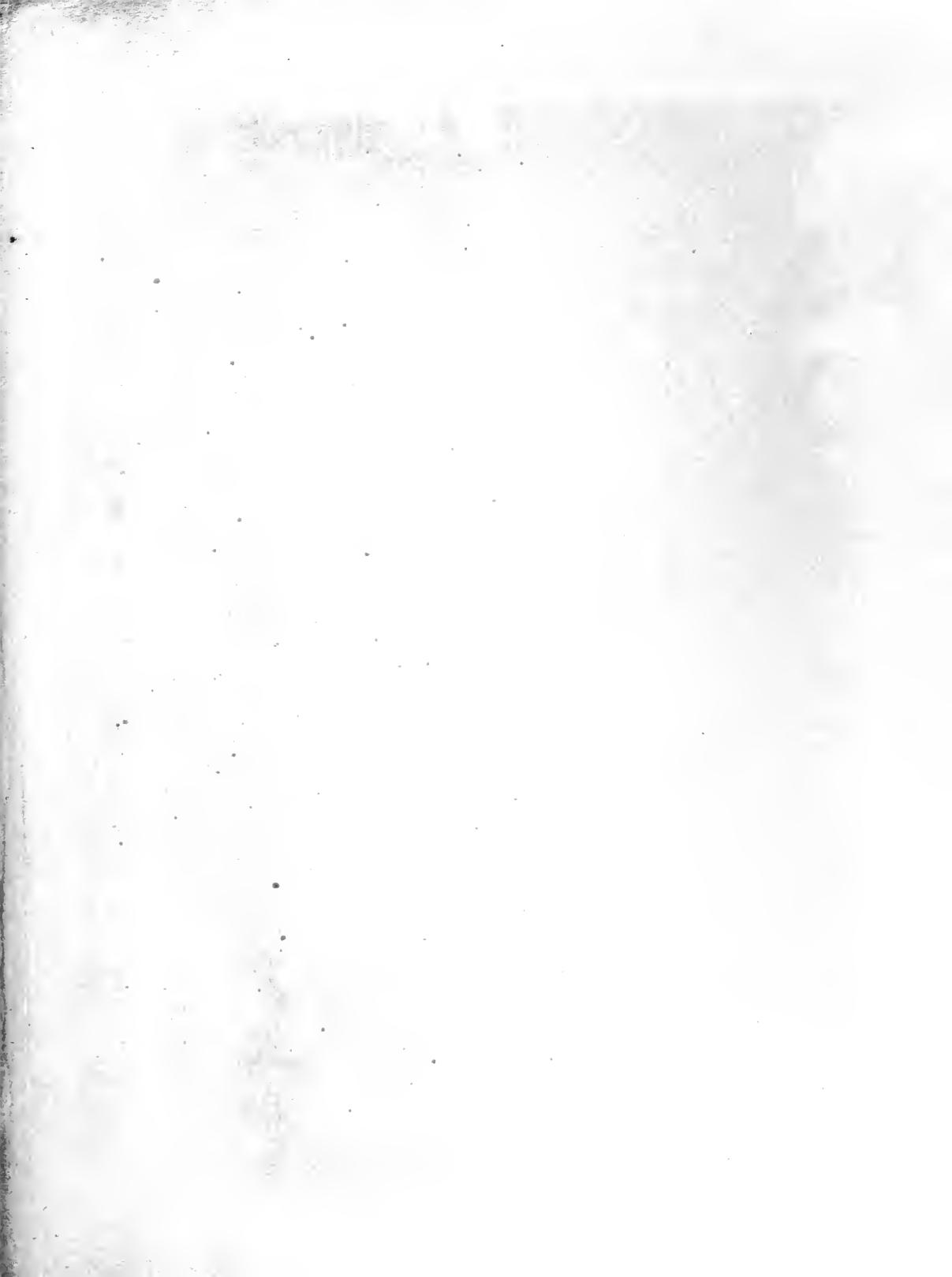
by

GEORGE VILLIERS





THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

20

IMAGES AND IMPRESSIONS.

Images and Impressions

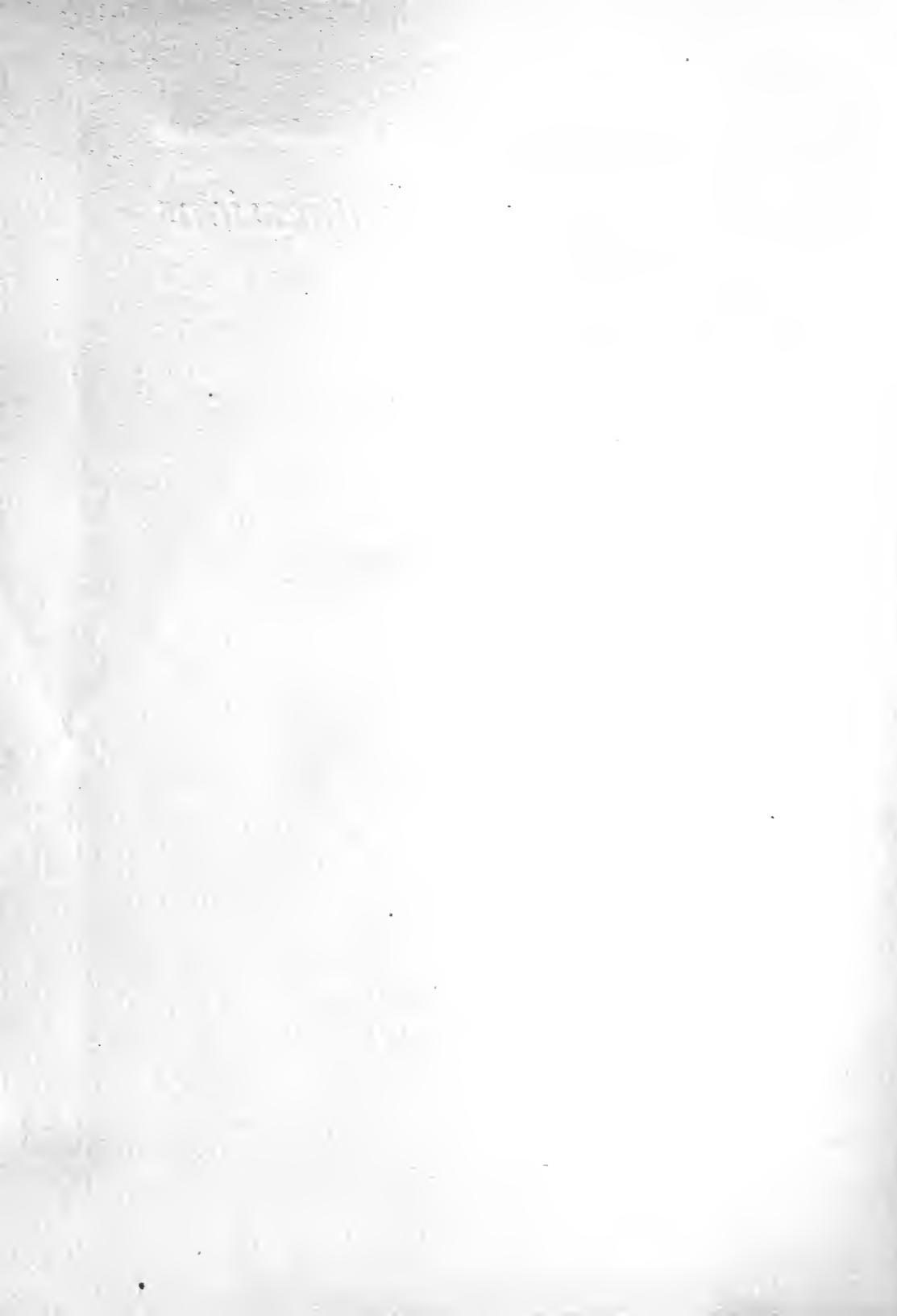
by

GEORGE VILLIERS

PAINSWICK

Printed for the Author by E. F. Millard

1921



PR
6043
17197

TO MY MOTHER

9449

CONTENTS :—

IN AUTUMN -	-	-	-	1
BLESSED ARE THE MOMENTS -	-	-	-	15
VALUES -	-	-	-	16
WINTER -	-	-	-	17
YESTERDAY -	-	-	-	18
To JEHANE -	-	-	-	19
To THE SAME -	-	-	-	20
KITCHEN-GARDEN -	-	-	-	21
COMING DOWN TO DINNER -	-	-	-	24
DAY-DREAMS -	-	-	-	26
IMMORTALITY -	-	-	-	28
IN CORNWALL :—				
1. MOTOR-BOAT -	-	-	-	33
2. NOCTURNE -	-	-	-	41
3. THE SHIP -	-	-	-	42
4. FOWEY -	-	-	-	44
5. LAND'S END -	-	-	-	45
OTHER POEMS :—				
THE BLACKBIRD -	-	-	-	53
AT AN EVENING PARTY -	-	-	-	54
CLOUDS -	-	-	-	55
DEATH'S ALCHEMY -	-	-	-	56
THE SINGER -	-	-	-	58
GLOUCESTER -	-	-	-	59
To —— -	-	-	-	60
ESCAPE -	-	-	-	61
THE POET IN THE GARDEN -	-	-	-	62
PRAYER -	-	-	-	63

*I hear the Everlasting Feet
Upon Earth's burning pavements beat :
I feel the Everlasting Breath
Blow through me in this House of Death :
I know a Beauty in beauty furled,
That is not of this latter world :
I see the Greater in the Less—
Do these things make for happiness ?*

*Myself a thing of dust and flame,
Assembled in a spoken name,
Shadow of a shadow, dim,
Conscribed by brain and heart and limb,
Needs must I wander for a space
About this unaccustomed place—
I who have stood in Fields of Fire
And heard the Cherubim inspire
Their proud descant in hymns upblown
Before the Deathless and Alone !*

IN AUTUMN.

(To D. B. and W. B.)

Afternoon . . .

I stroll out into the garden,
Lighting a pipe,
The crook of my stick hanging over my arm,
My cap in my hand,
Prepared for a walk.
In the distance
I can see my mother
At work among her flowers.
She is tending the dahlias down at the end of the border :
Her dress is of lavender,
And she bends over the tall blooms with loving gestures,
And she is in the sun,
And the butterflies are all about her.
Mother, I cry, coming up to her,
I'm going to walk over the hills and have tea with my friends—
I sha'n't be late back—
Why don't you come too ?

For see —

Never has there been such another afternoon as this
The whole long Autumn through !
When you look into the sky,
It seems to move towards you,
Like a diaphanous blue wave,
And a million little sparks of ether light
Detach themselves,
And dance a fairy dance,
Round and round,
Up and down,
Before your vision —
Then sink back again quite suddenly
Into the matrix blue.
Against the sun,—
All is an indistinguishable blur,
An ecstasy of golden mist :
But look the other way !—
It is as clear, as clear, as clear . . .
See the shoulder of that hill,

With what a sharp-cut definition it is flung against the sky !
 And the sky above it—
 How aloof and far away with dreams !
 It has that young look that the heavens have
 In early spring.

O, it will be lovely up on the hills to-day !
 There's a silvery breeze that seems to come from the
 Westward—

Just enough
 To make a little sibilant whisper among the bushes,
 Stirring the undergrowth to a faint song,
 As each withering leaf at the root of the hazel-clump,
 Or deep-set in a secret tangle of thorn,
 Sways to his fellow—

Just enough
 Ever so softly to ruffle the woodland,
 Parting the golden folds of it this way and that
 With a feathery fairy touch,
 As soft as the kiss of youth
 On the brows of age—

Just enough
 To rock the crystal day afloat in the ether,
 Dispersing the mists, and keeping the young airs sweet
 and clean,
 And the young day fearless and free ! —
 It will touch my cheek as I go, and rumple my hair :
 I'll feel the tang of it blow through my body,
 Making it clear and triumphant :
 I'll laugh and be glad !

And as I go—wherever I go—
 Wherever my wandering feet may lead and direct me—
 I shall be caught and enveloped in flame !
 On each side of the road
 The hedges will crackle with fire of the changing leaf :
 Fire of the thorn and bramble :
 Fire of the wild red briony-berry,
 And smoke of the feathery clematis.
 I'll walk through the flame of the fallen leaves,
 And the flame of the woodland
 Will be all above and beyond and around me.

O the golden trees, the golden trees of the woodland !—
The beeches burn with so consummate an ecstasy
You think the conflagration must be over in a minute,
While you watch ;
And yet they go on blazing, blazing, blazing,
Richer and redder and deeper :
You can never plumb the depths of them—
Never reach the red, burning heart of them,
And say, This is the end :
Always there will be a flame deeper than you thought.
If you send your spirit out to them,
It is lost—consumed in a blinding flash, taken up and
chastised !—
They are froward, and hostile, and splendid,
The beeches !
And the chestnuts . . .
They are philosophers among trees :
They brood and brood
To capture some ineffable idea
And dwell upon it,
Each heavy leaf a separate, burning thought,
Hanging, changing, developing,
As the tree thinks.
They are introspective :
They brood and brood and brood,
And in the midst of them
Is a bowery gloom of meditation,
Terrible, sublime . . .
Not so the oaks.
They are friendly and fearless :
They burn with a milder, gentler light :
They fill the mind with a soft ecstasy of pensive thought :
They are dreamy and wonderful,
The fawn-gold oaks !

From the top of the breezy upland
I shall see them all —
Look down upon the golden summit of them all—
See them all clustered together
In the dells and coombes and hollows of the hills :
They will tower above me as I mount,
And sink beneath me as I pass onward—
Wherever I go I shall be enveloped in flame !

O the golden trees, the golden trees !
 And the magic grass of the hills !
 The orchards and sloping meadows and pastures—
 Pasture succeeding to pasture,
 Each richer than the last,
 Where the white steers feed, and the cows
 As white as the milk that they yield !—
 O, I will go down into it all !
 Become one with it all !
 I will pass like a cloud across the upland
 Wrapt away in the dream of it all !
 And in the end—
 I will wake up among mine own people,
 The friends whom my spirit has chosen,
 And there will be happiness and rest and welcome !

O little mother of mine,
 You and your gardening !
 I wish you'd come too . . .

I will go by the winding footpath over the fields,
 Up to the village—
 Through the cut by the Vicarage garden—
 That leads to the Church—
 And into the broad Church-yard.
 (Does not all the life of the village lead through
 the Churchyard ?)
 Where the children play among the tombs ?
 The tall rectangular tombs with the table tops
 And the railings round ?—
 Where the broad paved paths cut straight across
 the turf,
 Linking the village from end to end,
 And the yews are shorn to a billowy roundness,
 And set in the midst of the tombs,
 And on the grass,
 And along the paths ?)
 I will make my way to the Lychgate,
 Close by the Moseley tomb :
 Then through the gate and across the road,
 (The broad main road wherē the motors go)
 So out of the village by the Doctor's house :

Then—*you know*—
Down the beech-lane down into the valley
Where the stream winds
Under the old grey bridge,
Where you and I,
When first we came here, used to sit and talk.
Do you remember ?

Do you remember ? —
The old mill-house at the end of the little green
valley—
The stream—the bridge—the parapet ? —
We used to sit and talk and dream there
Of how one day
We'd have a cottage in this countryside,
Because we loved it so.
Do you remember ? —

The falling of the water is the only sound there,
And the whisper of the willows and the alders,
When the little airs go in among their branches.
It is hushed and haunted and strange,
Set apart from the rest of the world ;
For the steep green slopes,
On either hand,
Sweep down to the edge of the water
Precipitately,—closing it in,
Making a little hollow coombe in the round of the
hills,
Like a giant's hand cupped for drinking,
Where the stream glides,
With a magical silvery sound,
Between the overhanging lips of the smooth-cropped,
apple-green turf.
It is hushed and haunted and strange,
Shut away from the winds,
And from the knowledge of men ;
And it says an intimate thing.
When you come up on it,
You lower your voice,
For fear of disturbing a Presence—
Pan's maybe, or a Fairy's . . .

We used to sit and talk there, and dream there :
 Do you remember ?—
 When I pass over the old grey bridge,
 I will feel the hush of the place,
 And salute it for its ghostly memories.

Then the white road leads up the hill on the other side.
 It will be steep—O, steep !—
 I shall lose my breath and feel my pulses throb
 And all my blood singing and sighing in my veins !
 And the tall trees will tower above me,
 So quiet and still and effortless,
 And I shall be straining beneath them !

There is a bowery grove at the top of the lane,
 Where the elms close right over you,
 Far up above and beyond you,
 Hiding the sky.
 You are caught in a golden prison :
 And the walls of it are gold :
 And the ceil of it is gold :
 And the shafts that leap up to support its summit
 of gold
 Are golden themselves,
 And forty feet high,
 Like the shafts of great spears held aloft by the
 unseen hands
 Of the golden gods . . .
 And from far away the dreamy light comes filtering
 through
 In a warm glory of gold,
 And your feet touch a pavement of flame—
 Never do I mechanically tread through this wonder
 in Autumn
 But a bird-like flash of my childhood comes back to
 me
 Over the years :—
 How once I stood in a golden Presence :
 In the midst of a golden Place :
 And had a golden Message given to me,
 To take and receive into the inmost heart of me,

And never to lose.
 Great responsibility attached ;
 And there were words of warning and wonder,
 And words of magical Love.
 Oh, but I have forgotten them, forgotten them ! ..
 All my life through I have forgotten them !

Perhaps to-day, as I walk through that earthly place,
 I shall hear them again.
 I will pause, and look about me, and listen.
 I will let the warm wonder of gold
 Steal into my heart.
 I will listen and wait.
 What shall I hear ?
 I'll be held in a golden glamour,
 Shall I catch my message of gold ?

Ah, no—
 I suppose I shall hear nothing but the whisper of
 the breeze,
 And my own blood singing and sighing . . .
 And then I shall laugh and pass on.

Do you remember
 When you come out again into the open,
 How the way sweeps off to the right
 Along a little lane that shelves the hill
 About half-way from the stream, whence you've
 come,
 And the top of the slope ?
 Above you the ascent leans back and is lost,
 But over its shoulder
 The sky comes flooding in like the irresistible tide
 When it sucks up the last reluctant tongue of pro-
 jecting sand,
 And all is sea.

You are right up on top of the world there—
 Up in the shining skies,
 With only the foam of the clouds above you,
 And the silvery breeze
 Sighing and swaying,
 Making a great music in the middle heavens

Over your head—
Joining its song with the lark's
In a sustained outburst of crystal melody,
Shrill as a sword ;
Ethereal, as the upper airs themselves ;
And heady, like wine.
Oh, you walk forward into the sudden silver clean-
ness of it all,
Like a boy transfigured with love ;
And a great god-like laughter fills the chest—
The foam tossed up of a joy
Too deep embedded in the unthinking spirit
For shape of words !—

Higher and higher you go,
For the ribbon of the road mounts ever in front of
your feet,
Though you seem on the crest of the world !—
Higher and higher you go,
More gloriously with every step ascending into the
high heavens,
With the green slopes falling beneath you,
And the habitations of men —
The farms—the homesteads—the orchards—
Even the cattle—left behind and below you
As upward you mount.
Far away, where you've been,
You see the little cottages—the gabled farms—
Peeping from the bowery groves of the trees,
Or shelved on the side of the hill,
With the green fields stretching above them :
You see the cattle grazing in the pastures—
A boy comes, like an atom in space,
Waving a stick and driving them home :
They string out in front of him with their low
backs straight in a line,
Like shapes in a sculptured frieze :
Scarcely you believe they are alive :
They are like toys !
They move with infinite slowness across a field,
And are lost to sight.
A woman comes out of a farm :

You can see her white apron glimmering against
the green ;
She throws something to white dots
That suddenly cluster about her :
They are chickens . . .
O, but it is all far, far away :
You are exalted above it.
You are alone up there with the clouds,—
Alone with the hills !

The hills !—

Around you and about you and beneath you,
Green fold upon green fold,
Rising and falling,
Like the regular breaths of a sleeper :
Receding into smothered distances :
Coming back to you again in great swirls and
eddies and rhythms :
Infinitely friendly and familiar :
Continuing forever and forever to speak the un-
utterable Word
In which we are all but syllables :
Seeming forever and forever to swell forth in a
great diapason of unspoken sound,
Wherein all other sounds
—Our own, no less—
Are taken up and merged and harmonised :
Faithful, and fearless, and splendid :
Mothers of us all who clamber on their slopes,
Or nestle in the intimate recesses of their green
bosoms :
Protective, and patient, and loving—
The hills !—The hills !—

I will linger by a gate I know :
Lean over it,
And drink in the wonder and beauty of it all
Deep down into my soul
Like a great draught of ghostly wine
Deeper and deeper going,
Cleansing all as it goes.
And I shall have again that divine sense

That I am not a thing apart from it all,
 Walking over the surface of it all,
 Estranged from it all ;
 But rather, that the deep music which exists at the
 heart of my being,
 Throwing up from time to time,
 (Through, oh, how many difficulties and obstacles,
 and veils of illusion)
 The foam of these verses and cadences—
 Is the deep music that also has thrown up the hills,
 And made pleasant the valleys with laughing
 flowers, and with trees ;
 And I shall rejoice !

O, I will go down into it all !
 Become one with it all !
 I will pass like a cloud across the upland
 Wrapt away in the dream of it all !
 And in the end—
 I will wake up among mine own people,
 The friends whom my spirit has chosen,
 And there will be happiness and rest and welcome !

* * * *

She'll be sitting in that long room of their's
 Which smells of cedar-wood, and burning logs,
 And polished furniture.
 It will be dusk when I arrive ;
 But the lamps will not have come in yet ;
 For she loves the firelight.
 And from somewhere deep in the shadows,
 She will rise and come forward to greet me,
 With hands outstretched—
 Trembling and white through the dusk, like a
 homing ship ;
 And all about me,
 Seeming to come out of the shadows,
 And out of the warm glow—
 Seeming to rise up out of the very furniture,
 The venerable objects, known and beloved, of that
 intimate room)
 I shall feel the soft and invisible wings,
 Clamouring about me,

Of Welcome and Love.

As I clasp her hand I will laugh and look up in her eyes—
Without word or explanation or pretence
I shall be accepted, understood.

Tea will come :

Tea, on the little round table
In the great bay-mullion window
At the end of the room.

Tea . . .

The silver kettle hissing and steaming —
The gleaming plates—the cups—the saucers—the doyleys—
There will be arrangement and moving and passing of things,
To the fairy tinkle of spoons
And clatter of knives,
As the cups and plates are set down.
O, she will set all in order —
She will distribute and arrange with swift gestures ;
And I will watch her two hands flutter like moths,
This way and that, as they pass on their errands
Over the burdened tray . . .
There'll be scones, and new bread-and-butter, and
blackberry-jam,
With great draughts of amber-coloured tea,
As deep and refreshing as wine ! —
And soon the lamps will come in,
Flooding the little circle where we are gathered together
With an orange glow,
Making each object gleam with a lovely light —
Catching our eyes, our lips, our hair,
And making them shine.
(Ah, the lamps when they come in at dusk between friends ! . . .)

Then he will be there :

He will come in and cross over the shadows,
And enter our circle of light :
He, the artist in stone,

The maker of beautiful dwellings,—
 He, the poet in action,
 Transformer of dreams into life
 And life into dreams,—
 Joyous, quixotic, and friendly—
 With ever the mind of a man
 And the heart of a boy !

His face will light up when he sees me ;
 For with him, too, I am accepted.
 Our deeper conversation is wordless, but understood ;
 And there is rest of spirit and spirit between us.

Then after tea,
 We will drag three deep armchairs to the circle of firelight,
 And at once the children will break in on us :
 First *Boy*, very straight and slim,
 (He, too, wrapt away in dreams)
 He will come forward with an old-world, courtly
 grace that he has,
 And after mysteriously shaking my hand,
 And bowing his head,
 He will go over to his mother,
 And stand, like a page, by her chair,
 Silent and strange.
 Then *Bimmy* the girl, who's body never still,
 But seems ever desirous
 Of roaming and slipping over the surface of things,
 To know their substance.
 She will tumble and frolic and laugh,
 And her hair will fall over her eyes,
 Misty and gold in the firelight.
 And, last, on the shoulder of a white-frocked nurse,
 The baby-boy—
 All curves, and waving arms, and gurgling sounds.

Then in the far, warm spaces of the outer room,
 Removed from our little circle by the fire,
 Yet not so far removed

But that the sweet sense of them is all about us,
Pulling our hearts,—
These children will make for themselves dear
 busy games,
And play them out upon the floor,
Laughing happily.
We'll hear their little pattering feet,
Like rain . . .

And we three by the fire will sit and talk
Of friendly and familiar things—
The little matters of the countryside,
And gossip of the farms :
And then of books, and the power of words to twist
 and move the heart :
Of poems and people, and the beautiful works of
 men's hands,
And of man's indomitable spirit, ceaselessly creating
New forms of endeavour and achievement—
And of all the glory and goodness of life,
And love of the world.

At last I will rise to go,
And they will say—
“No, stay and dine : what matter if its dark —
You've brought a lantern :
We saw it in the hall—
Do stay !”—
But I will say no, because of you, Mother.
And not unwillingly either ;
For now I long to adventure the misty darkness,
Swinging my lantern this way and that,
And watching the spiky hedges leap into being
At its fairy touch,
While over my head—
The ice cold stars peep out of the night,
And the great queen moon rides in the middle
 heavens,
Weeping through a smeeth of cloud.
The scent of the night will be the scent of the
 fallen leaves,
And of the damp earth :

And the sound of the night will be the melancholy song
 of the owls
 Making plaint in the woods—
 The night will be a cloak in which I will wrap myself,
 Deeper and deeper going down into the rich folds of it,
 To merge and be lost in it.

They will accompany me to the door :
 Watch me light my lantern :
 Put my coat on :
 Twirl my scarf round my neck . . .
 I can see them there in the hall —
 He, with that grave look of his, like a child,
 watching ;
 She, with her hand on his shoulder,
 And her cheek on her hand,
 Looking out at me,
 Beloved mother of children,
 Saying little friendly solicitous things,
 Mothering even me ;—
 Then the door will open into a pit of blackness,
 And I will feel the night strike cold through my ribs,
 Stripping me bare of my dreams, as a tree of its leaves.
 My breath will be smoke in the light of the lantern,
 As I set off.
 I will go down the little paved path that leads to the
 gate at the end :
 When I get to the gate, I will turn and look back.
 For a moment they will be there,
 Their forms silhouetted and black against the orange
 glow within.
 I will wave, holding my lantern on high :
 They will wave back.
 I will hear their laughter and godspeed floating out to
 me—
 Out to me over the dark from the light within—
 Then of a sudden, the door will close,
 And they will be lost.

 O, little mother of mine,
 You and your gardening !
 Won't you come, too ?

 No ?—
 Well, I'll be off !

BLESSED ARE THE MOMENTS.

Blessed are the moments when the spirit of man goes out
to the spirit of Earth,
To merge and commingle therewith—
For here is Peace.

Blessed are the moments when man knows himself as the
fairest flower of the Earth,
Thrown up by the Earth—
For here is Joy.

But blessed are the moments when he knows that the moving
spirit of Beauty in all that he sees
Is the moving spirit of Beauty in the depths of his soul—
His own innermost soul—
For here is Truth at last ; and Immortality at last;
And the ending of Doubt.

VALUES.

What does it matter
If I cannot express myself as I wish ?—
If I am poor and companionless,
And have a half-uttered love in my heart,
And a pain in my mind,
And in all my senses
Because of it ?—
What does it matter
If my contemporaries shun me,
And think me mad ?—
If I ride the middle-heavens of life, like a lonely star
Which has swung from the orbit of its constellation
Into an aching void ?—
What does it matter
If I'm lost,
Or damned,
Or dead,—

If still the everlasting glory of God
Be poured out over all the lands of the earth,
In streams of inextinguishable Beauty—
If still the flowers laugh in the happy sunshine,
And the warm spring grasses wave in the wind,
And the lambs run to their mothers in the orchard
Under the blossom—
If still there be courage in the hearts of men,
And love in the hearts of women,
And Life, coming and going upon the Earth,
Bringing Freedom and Joy ?

WINTER.

The garden lies withered and frozen :
A thrush hops across the paved way
And disappears into the dry sticks
Of the flower-border :
He is looking for food.
Other birds come,
And I know their must be little rustling noises
In among leafless bushes.

Beyond —
The blur of the cold
Has eaten like acid into the heart of the landscape :
The breasts of the hills, the valleys, the coombes,
The tops of the trees in the middle-distance —
All merge and mingle together
In a vast indistinguishable gloom ;
And there is no courage anywhere,
Or hope anywhere —

But the little cottage-room is aglow with the firelight :
There is warmth, and comfort, and peace ;
And I sit at my writing-table,
A centre of human Intelligence and Divination,
With the whole Universe in my head ;
And in my heart
An inexpressible Wonder and Joy—
A Shining—a Splendour,
As of God . . .

YESTERDAY.

The breath of my creative spirit was like an
October wind,
But my thoughts were like rooks before it.
Madly they sprawled over the low leaden heavens
of my contemplation,
And there was no coherence in them—
Only a wild gesture, helpless and despairing,
Like the rooks'.

But always the wind blew, following after ;
And as it entered the desolate English landscape of my mind,
From something soft in the breath of it —
Perchance a beautiful dim scent of flowers,
Awakening the memory of gardens, facing the sea,
Asleep in the diamond morning of the Mediterranean —
Perchance a sudden vision of pine-trees and red rocks
With the feet of the foam beneath
And the white birds crying and calling —
Perchance from these, fugitive and faint in the heart of it,
I felt it had come from the lands I love.

But it blew into the desolate English landscape of my mind,
And my thoughts were like rooks before it.
Madly they sprawled over the low leaden heavens
of my contemplation,
And there was no coherence in them —
Only a wild gesture, helpless and despairing,
Like the rooks'.

Oh, what might it not have told me, this wind —
This wind of the heart that blew from the glamourous South ?—

TO JEHANE

I see your sun-gold head aflame upon the cushions ;
 The cushions are blue, and blue is the deep chair in which you
 sit reading ;
 It comes forward with great arms enfolding you in ;
 Your little curled form is quite lost in it.

By your side is a table ; the sunlight comes in upon it,
 Illumining the objects thereon—the blotter—the inkstand—the
 calendar-frame ;
 It kisses your hair, and the side of your face, and your bosom ;
 But you are unconscious of it. You sit there reading, reading . . .

Your body is flung back among the cushions
 In the dreamy abandonment of thought ;
 It is like blossom, bemused upon the grass, where the wind has
 thrown it ;
 And I look at you as if I had never seen you before —
 Away from yourself, you are more than ever yourself !

Your little hands are crooked over the stiff edges of the book ;
 The book is heavy ; when it falls low you lift it up again,
 And alter the position of your fingers upon it ;
 With firm, unconscious gestures they move about
 Over the smooth surface of the binding.

Your blue eyes are like speedwells reflecting the Spring heavens ;
 They look straight out upon the print, but, oh, how far beyond !—
 The room—the chair in which you sit—the table—the sunlight—
 These things do not exist for you ; you are wrapt away—
 Your forehead is a cloud passing over the heaven of Thought.

The faint, far spirit that I love is flown out upon the waters ;
 It flies like a gull, low, low over the foam, following the ship
 That bears Shelley, the magic boy,—Shelley and his love
 To the fair isle he wrought for her
 Out of the flaming ore of his Imagination.

Such is the vision of you that I conjure up ;
 And my heart dwells in the vision, and is restored, and is
 refreshed :
 When I am away from you, I have to make visions of you,
 So that I can actively love you, and dwell in you,
 And feel the peace of you, giving me courage and inspiration.

TO THE SAME

Come down to me, come down to me, O my Beloved !
O my Star, come down to me !
Can you not hear the inarticulate pleading of my youth,
Which cries for the comfort of your womanhood ?—

O, if I could feel the mother-pity waken in you,
And know that with your still virgin breast,
And with your still virgin arms,
You leaned over me—
Took me to you, as who should say :
“Ah, rest, poor child : rest here, rest here,
And ease your heart a space.”
Then—
Ah, then it would be no hunger of the body
That would arise in me :
No sobbing of the rebellious flesh
For impossible fruition—
Not these :
But rather,—
Through the deep stillness of my soul asleep in you,
The ineffable sense of God’s returning tide
Coming back to me over leagues and leagues of distance,
Through infinite lapses of Time,
Fulfilling every particle of my nature
With unspeakable Love :
Giving me Wonder again,
And Vision again,
And Courage to go on my ways . . .

KITCHEN-GARDEN.

Down the long lavender border,
 The white butterflies are hovering
 In the mellow Autumn sunshine.
 They are like the minutes of the golden afternoon
 That have paused to play.
 Endlessly they flutter and chase one another,
 And circle, and kiss
 Over the tall, grey spikes ;
 And Time ceases,
 As if to watch their gambols.

(Surely to-day the year sinks back upon itself,
 Brooding, reminiscent,
 And full of dreams . . .
 I, too, am assailed by reminiscence.
 —Strange, formless, impalpable reminiscence
 In tune with the gathering Autumn.
 Subconsciously
 I go far back along my roots
 Into the past,
 And am one with the tradition which bore me.)

Behind the lavender,
 The Michaelmas-daisies
 Pile themselves in lovable, untidy heaps,—
 Pile themselves caressingly, overwhelmingly
 Against the smooth old knees
 Of the fruit-wall,
 Which stretches in marvellous perspective,
 Bisecting the sky,—
 Stretches like Time itself,
 Right away down the vision —
 Till it is lost in the bosky dusk,
 The misty antiquity
 Of the beeches and sycamores and elms,
 At the edge of the park.

Somewhere the gardeners are working :
 I can hear the click of their spades in the earth,
 But I cannot see them.
 They are behind a great leafy screen
 Of ripening apples and pears,
 On the other side of the path.
 Their speech comes to me, sometimes, breaking
 the silence,—
 Broad country speech of the West,
 Rising and falling in cadence as they pause from
 their work :
 Then a laugh—
 Then the click of the spades again.

The figure of a women emerges
 From the end of the border,
 Brushing through the billowy lavender
 With a lovely gesture.
 Slowly she approaches,
 Walking up the smooth grass path towards me.
 She is dressed all in white,
 And her face and her hands are gold in the sunlight.
 She carries a great bronze bunch
 (Like a golden shield)
 Of the chrysanthemums she has been picking.
 She comes up to me, smiling,
 And shading her eyes from the sun.
 “Look at these,” she cries, “Are’nt they lovely !—”
 And she holds the great cluster high over her head,
 Shaking the diamond drops of the dew
 From their golden tresses,
 (The dew which the sun has failed to absorb
 Even now in the afternoon.)
 “I’m going to put some in your bedroom” she says,
 “I know you love them, the bronze ones.”

(I have a vision of where they will be—
 On the writing table,
 By the window where I dream,
 Close to the chintz-covered bed.)

She is speaking again :—
“I’ve got to go up to the village :
Old Hubbard is dead.
You remember old Hubbard,—
He used to be estate carpenter here for years,—
A dear old man with a white beard,
And a flat pencil always behind his ear.
He died this morning.
I don’t know what the poor old lady, his wife,
Will do without him.
I must go.

By-the-bye,—
I’ve told them to light a fire in the Library :
We always used that room in Autumn
When Dad was alive :
I thought we might have tea there to-day . . .
Don’t wait for me, though,—
I shall be late.”

She goes on up the path and into the house.

And suddenly,—
As I turn to watch her go,
An overmastering love rises up in my heart
For the strange and incongruous things—
The traditional, beautiful things,—
The reticent things,—
Which have hedged me in from a child.

O England ! England ! England ! I cry
With the tears welling up in my eyes . . .

COMING DOWN TO DINNER.

A sudden loveliness,—
 A flutter, as of wings,—
 And I look up.

Wrapt in an intimacy of embrace
 Alone achieved among women,
 Very slowly coming down the length of the great hall
 Towards me, but unconscious of me,
 My dear one and another!—
 The taller, the elder, protective, mothering,
 With an arm thrown round the dreaming form of my love—
 And she—my love—relaxed,
 At rest in the crook of her arm—
 An unspeakable beauty enveloping them both,
 As of their own two hearts
 Made perceptible in atmosphere
 Round them and about them,
 Preceeding them,
 Protecting them.

A sudden throb in my heart
 Makes me infinitely desire to go up to them
 And cry to them—
 O, what have you been saying to each other?—
 What have you been saying to each other to-night,
 That makes you both so beautiful,
 And wise,
 And strange,
 And inaccessible,
 Like stars?—

But I neither move nor speak.

They pass me by:
 I feel an intimate peace descending upon me
 From the hush of their two spirits—
 (Verily, there is holiness in women
 We men know nothing of) . . .
 They smile at me—
 And with that smile they shut me out from them.

(As they pass
I see my dear one---
Her little fair head
Thrown back upon the bosom of the other :
Her eyes bemused with a happiness
Beyond my ken.)

Sorrowfully, I turn and gaze into the fire,
And spread my hands before it.
I know there are heavens I cannot enter,
Being male—
Whole reaches of the Universe
From which I must ever be excluded ;—
And I am sad . . .

DAY-DREAMS.

We are gathering apples in the orchard,
 Up on the hill
 By Washbrook Farm.

The men are there
 With their bill-hooks, and ladders, and baskets,
 And there's a great to-do,
 With voices crying and calling,
 And laughter
 Under the trees . . .

(Oh, the men
 Looking up in the boughs,
 And shading their eyes with their hands,
 Their arms and necks and faces a-gleam in the sunlight,
 Dusky and gold !)

There's a stirring and shaking
 In the leaves overhead ;
 And the tops of the trees
 Dance in the sunlight,
 Backwards and forwards,
 Against the blue ;
 And the fruit patters down to the ground
 With a little whispering rush
 Through the trellis of leaves.

The children come out
 With their mother and the white-frocked nurses.
 They sit, spread out upon the grass,
 Like flowers . . .

My little son runs laughing towards me,—
 Clutching the coat of a shaggy old dog that he loves.
 He takes my hand and looks up at me ;—
 And the blue of his eyes
 Is the blue of all the seas I have known ;
 And the gold of his hair

Is the gold of all the dawns I have worshipped ;
And a great spasm of joy
Leaps through my being . . .

(O, the games we have by the up-turned cart,
The running from tree to tree !—
The laughter and frolic and fun !—
The thrills and adventures !)

Evening comes,
And the ruddy October day,
With its burden of red-gold woods
And patient skies,
Sinks down into the bosom of the dusk ;
And the dusk rises up to meet it,
Like a drowsy lover awakening
Out of the valley below . . .

Now the shadows prevail in the orchard,
And colour has flown,
And a crescent moon, like the slipper of a god,
Is gathering strength overhead,
Tipping the dew-drenched spears of the grass
With its ghostly gleam—
And we pass in to the firelight,—
The comfort, and welcome and peace
Of the old grey, whispering house,
The house which is Home.

IMMORTALITY.

The curve of the road in the dusk :
 A moon overhead,
 Gathering glory,
 (I see my shadow behind me)—
 Myself trudging home through the owlet light
 Of the winter's eve.

Stubble-fields rounding the crest of the hill,
 Wreathed in a little creeping mist—
 The dying breath of the departing day
 Made visible in the frore air,
 Beautiful as a dream.

The beech copse—
 Tall, sentinel trees,
 Making a black lace against the sky,
 Deathly still,
 But speaking to me :
 Saying a thing I understand :
 Calling to me.

Over all—
 Dominating all—
 The hills,
 Deepening divinely into the obliteration
 Of the on-coming night.

O mystery ! . .

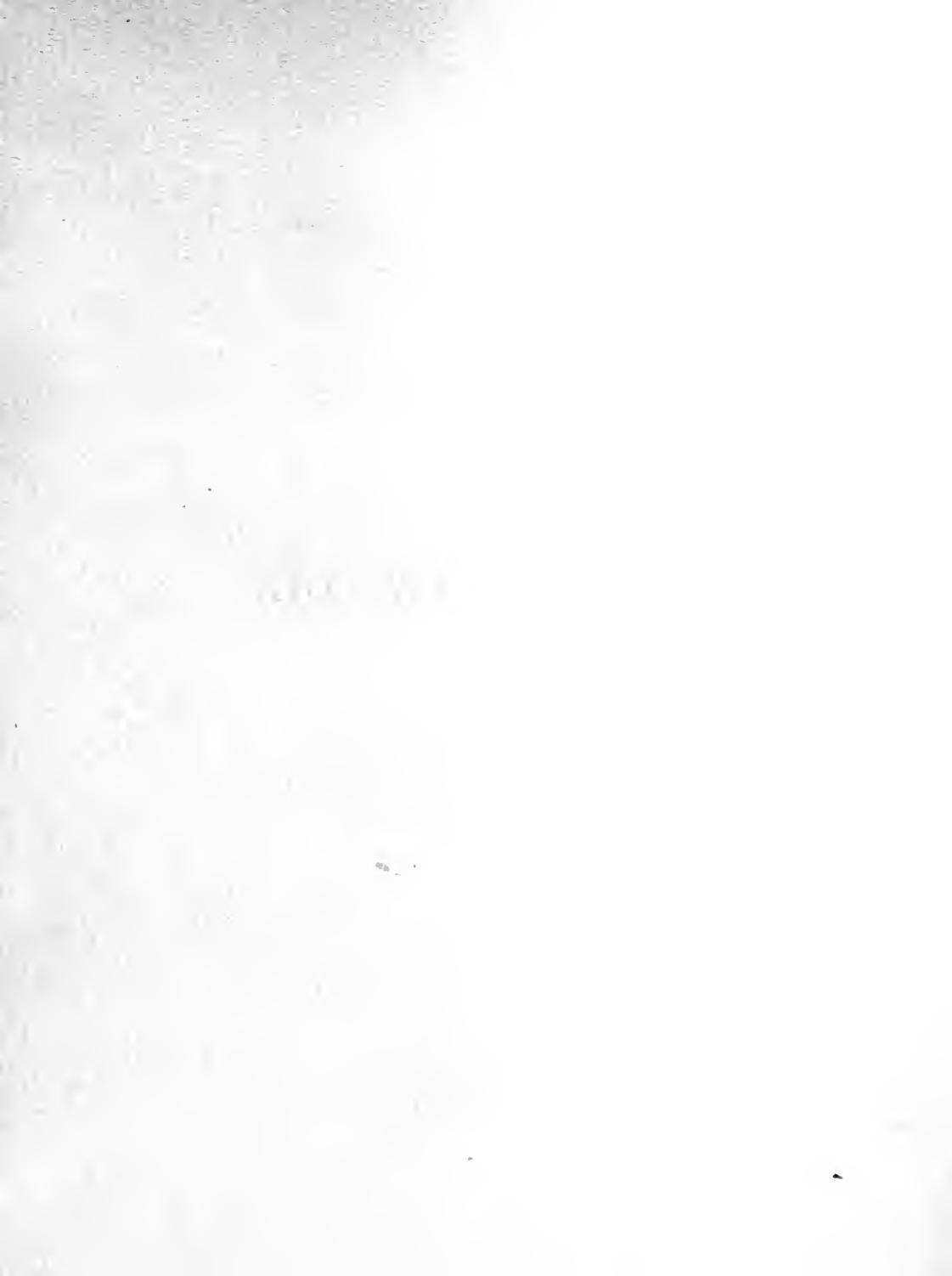
I am gone from myself—
 I am every human being
 Who has ever stood on a roadway, under a moon, at dusk,
 With all the heaven of life in his heart,
 And youth in his veins !
 And I am the moon, and the stars,
 And the wind, and the rain,
 And the blossom on the orchard bough in spring,
 And the heart of a little child.
 And I am the dog that barks in the valley,
 And the partridge that calls in the meadow—

My spirit is the Spirit of Beauty and Love that moves in
these things—
What though I die a thousand deaths,
Can It be destroyed ?—

A great god-like laughter fills my chest ;
And I walk home through the gathering dusk,
At peace with Life,
And with Death.

IN CORNWALL.

(To J. S., in memory of Summer, 1921.)



1. MOTOR-BOAT.

Over the wine-dark sea plashing and plunging—
 Marvellously not collapsing or oversetting
 In our little coracle of a motor-boat!—
 The engine thrumming an accompaniment
 To the crying and singing of the wind—
 To the scream of the gulls—
 To the buffet and fruther of foam,
 When a wave catches our bows end-on,
 And scatters the spray high over our heads,
 As onward we plunge!

(White is our boat, like the dropped plume of a gull
 In the trough of a wave,
 And drenched with sunlight :
 Amber and gold is our flesh in the gold of the sun,—
 Our arms—and necks—and faces,—
 Our hands.)

High over us
 The bold and beautiful headlands
 Lie long and lithé, projecting into the water,
 Couchant, like drowsy leopards asleep in the sun.
 We creep in round their jagged paws,
 And look fearfully up
 At their sleek flanks,—
 Golden and ruddy they tower above us,
 Adream in the haze of the sun,
 And glistening with spray.

Great caps of green
 Cling about their rugged brows,
 Cropped and shorn by the wind
 To a marvellous smoothness,—
 Where the little wild thyme hides its head, I know,
 And the sea-thrift clings,
 Shrivelled and wild with the spray,
 Trembling and nodding
 Over vast abysses.
 In places the wall of the granite is broken,

And the land falls back in great answering rhythms and sweeps,
 (Like the lilt of a song),
 Beckoning, beckoning,—
 Friendly with all manner of cultivation :
 Rich with the chequer of fields,
 And the falling together of woods :
 Fair wth farms, and the dwellings of men,
 And the spires of churches—
 Beckoning inland up narrow coombes and valleys
 From little pebbly beaches
 At the edge of the foam—
 Beckoning ever inland from the waste of granite and sea.
 Cornwall !—

We gaze up through the warmth and colour and splendour of it all :
 In imagination we disembark on the narrow shelf of the beaches :
 We adventure the coombes and valleys,—
 Find little twisting pathways up from the sea,
 Through oakwoods and coppices :
 Past the low-lying gables of farms,
 Emerging from elms—
 Past rick-yards, dusty with chaff—
 Through sloping orchards
 Where the little streams gather and murmur,
 On their way down the ravines
 To the sea,—
 Onward in spirit we go
 Into the rich heart of the country,
 Answering the beckoning, friendly call,—
 The siren call of the land . . .
 Then the implacable slope of the rock
 Closes again,
 And, quicker than thought,
 We adjust our eyes to the grim smooth surfaces,—
 The jagged edges,—
 The wrinkles and furrows and crannies
 Of the inevitable, inaccessible granite,
 Where the gulls reel,
 And the feet of the cliffs are awash
 In the fret of the foam.

Seaward all is a dancing trouble
 Of wine-dark water and spray,—
 Illimitable spaces of it
 Seeming forever and forever to be advancing upon us
 In packed and tumultuous formation,—
 Cavalry of the sea,
 Line upon line surging up to us,
 Breaking in upon us,
 Enveloping us,—
 Ridge upon ridge,—
 Each with its crest of spray,
 Its knot of the sweet white foam,
 Laughing and gurgling,—
 Slapping our prow,
 As the gunwale rises and dips.
 The vast dome of the air
 Is drenched through and through with the sunlight :
 Drunken with excess of the golden wine of it :
 The far away heavens are cloudless and blue,
 And sails are white on their breast.

(O dreams, dreams, wide-flung as the heavens themselves,
 Rising from the inaccessible depths of consciousness
 In answer to the illimitable spaces,—
 The boundless freedom.—the light,—the air,—
 The splendour of sun and of wind,—
 All restraint of convention and superstition
 So marvellously dropping away,—
 Dissolving like a wraith,—
 Slipping backward into the eternity of things accomplished
 and done with :—
 The spirit knowing its own,
 Marvellously going out to it,
 Stretching the consciousness to envelop it, and become one
 with it,—
 Loveliness greeting loveliness
 Within and without !)

Low over the foam flies a solitary gull
 To join the white company of his fellows,
 Gathered like dropped snow-flakes
 On the broad sun-spaces of a smooth, low hummock of rock
 At the foot of the cliffs.

He thrusts his white neck straight as he flies
 To give a wild, strange, gabbling cry,
 Piercing, insistent,—
 Answered immediately in many-tongued, clamorous
 cacophony
 From the group on the rocks.

The mackerel-trawlers are out :—
 In the distance we descry them,—
 A colony of little black boats a-dream on the foam,
 Their sleek dark flanks tossing and dipping
 In the trough of the waves.
 We pass three out together, hugging the shore,
 Working a landward school.
 We can see the brown arms of the men hauling and shifting,
 Hear even their cries and laughter.
 Our man at the tiller calls to them :
 They call back with an answering shout.
 Something passes between them,
 (We know not what)
 Some courtesy of the sea,
 Some greeting...
 Their shouts die away upon the water,
 As onward we plunge !

(O dreams, dreams, wide-flung as the heavens themselves,
 Rising from the inaccessible depths of consciousness
 In answer to the illimitable spaces,—
 The boundless freedom,—the light,—the air,—
 The splendour of sun and of wind —
 All restraint of convention and superstition
 So marvellously dropping away,—
 Dissolving like a wraith,—
 Slipping backward into the eternity of things accomplished
 and done with,—
 The spirit knowing its own
 Marvellously going out to it,
 Stretching the consciousness to envelop it, and become one
 with it,—
 Loveliness greeting loveliness,
 Within and without !)

Polperro !—

Already we have arrived in the little harbour
 And the roar of the sea
 Is left far behind.
 This quiet is like waking
 From a turbulent dream
 To find the hush of the morning upon you :
 We are amazed at it ;
 And our cheeks are still aglow with the wind,
 Here, where no wind is.
 We creep in under the high protecting rock ;
 And houses appear,
 Clambering up the precipitous slopes
 On both sides,
 And in the middle,—
 Tier upon tier—
 Little friendly-faced houses with jagged roofs,
 Tumbling one upon another
 In talkative, comfortable confusion,—
 Scrambling for a place
 In the narrow circle of the little cove.
 The gulls wheel and cry round the jetty
 And the nets are out to dry,—
 Festoons of them hung on the sea-wall,
 Gleaming browns, and umbers, and ochres, and blacks,
 Against the grey of the stone . . .

Three lounging men,
 With incurious eyes,
 Watch us approach.
 They smoke placidly in the sun,
 And do not speak . . .

An open space of pavement, glistening wet,
 The fish market !—
 (We are almost alongside now.)
 The barrels stand packed in a row—
 The barrels and boxes, ready for the London market—
 And there are great scales in the corner for weighing.
 (The stench of stale fish is all pervading and overpowering ;
 But the houses, the little friendly houses,

Smile down a welcome,
Happy and quiet in the sun,
As we approach.)

We disembark, running up the wet steps,
Laughing, with the spirit of adventure.
I carry the cushions and the tea-basket,
And other paraphernalia
Of a picnic.
Laden, we set forth.
Where shall we go?
All is a new world to us, thrilling and strange.
We feel the weird new sense of it,
Clamouring at the gates of consciousness,
Seeking to be known, installed in our minds, loved.

The little houses call to us :
“ Come and discover us :
We are quiet and happy here, with the sun and the sea :
We are old in men’s love,
And know the secrets of life :
The generations are born in us,
And go forth from us,
And come back to us :
There is much love in us,
And memory in us ;
And we are full of quaint, creaking furniture,
And chattering clocks.
Come and discover us !—”

Through the little hushed streets, narrow and silent,
We thread our adventuring way,
Silent ourselves,
For fear of disturbing something.—
(We know not what; but there’s something we mustn’t
disturb—
A feeling, a Presence . . .)
Up and down steps we go—
Round twisting corners—
Under archways—
Down little whispering gullies of streets

That lead to the sea.
 And ever the houses speak to us, deliver their message
 to us,—
 Their message of those who toil in the sea,
 And return from the sea to love, to sleep, to die.
 Year after year,
 Generation after generation,
 It is always the same...
 We look in at the open doors.
 There are little mats on the floor,
 And china ornaments packed on the mantel-piece ;
 No-one's about.
 But we have caught the message :
 We know—we understand—we are there—
 The heart of the place is kind and familiar :
 We are accepted... .

How many hours—how many hours
 Do we spend discovering and investigating ?
 How many hours on the rocks sitting, and talking and
 dreaming,
 Lulled by the song of the tide,
 The whisper and lisp of it,
 Fretting the feet of the cliffs
 Aeons below ?—
 At last we turn homeward again.
 (Is it all Eternity we have spent there ?
 Are we two souls descending out of heaven,
 From the detached and incurious life of the worlds above
 Into the clamour of earth ?
 Ah, who shall say ?)

Homeward again !—
 Over the wine-dark sea plashing and plunging—
 Marvellously not collapsing or oversetting
 In our little coracle of a motor-boat !—
 The engine thrumming an accompaniment
 To the crying and singing of the wind—
 To the scream of the gulls—
 To the buffet and fruther of foam,
 When a wave catches our bows end-on,
 And scatters the spray high over heads,
 As onward we plunge !—

Homeward again,—
The purple evening deepening divinely
Round us and about us,—
The heavens alive and on fire in the West :
The zenith glimmering with the opalescence of dusk,—
Night coming up from the sea.

(O dreams, dreams, wide-flung as the heavens themselves,
Rising from the inaccessible depths of consciousness,
In answer to the illimitable spaces,—
The boundless freedom,—the light,—the air.—
The splendour of sun and of wind,—
All restraint of convention and superstition
So marvellously dropping away,—
Dissolving like a wraith,—
Slipping backward into the eternity of things accomplished
and done with ;
The spirit knowing its own,
Marvellously going out to it,
Stretching the consciousness to envelop it, and become one
with it,—
Loveliness greeting loveliness
Within and without !)

2. NOCTURNE. (*Two on a Terrace.*)

A grey uniformity of tone
Passes its hand over the eyes of the dusk,
Obliterating all detail,
All definition.

Sea and sky faint together,
And are mingled and lost
In a vast meaningless stare,
Gleaming and wan.

Only the giant brows of the headland
Above and beyond us
Stand out in colossal relief,
Hullish and beast-like,—
A great block of tone,—
A tremendous profile,—
Shimmering black against the eye of the sea.

A grey uniformity of tone
Covers all consciousness,
Invades it,
Masters it ever more wholly and completely,
As the minutes slip on into night.

The soul seems caught up and enshrined in it,
Evoking a mood marvellous with the texture of it,—
Opalescent, with strange quiet gleams, deep and prophetic,
Speech issuing therefrom, hushed and subdued,
But ever deeper going
Into the profound tranquillities
Which lie at the root of life,—
Sentences, like dull red flames—flickering—
Falling,—dying,—flickering again,—
Twixt spirit and spirit.

3. THE SHIP.

The great black Ship
 Glides disdainfully down the fairway,
 Proud—with her escort of gulls,
 A single light high up in her rigging,
 Her helm to the open sea—

The great black Ship
 That has dwarfed the harbour,
 Making the houses look like toys—
 That has dwarfed even the great hotel
 And the Court-House up on the hill—

The great black Ship,
 Like a proud and sorrowful woman,
 Pursuing her way,
 Full of dreams and gathered experiences,
 Splendid, aloof . . .

She passes :
 And a voice from her decks
 —A golden voice, an evening voice,
 Like the voice of the ship herself—
 Floats down to us over the stillness.

Faintly I catch the words
 “ . . . to the Americas, to the Americas ! ”

To the Americas !—I cry,
 O life, O ecstasy !—

O you Romance upon the Waters
 So beautifully going down from us into the dusk
 With your hidden freight,
 What seas will you breast ?
 What tempest and storms will you weather ?
 What stars will you lean to,
 Before you berth in your unknown Port
 Beneath the palms ?—

What gleaming eyes will strain for your landfall —
What hands and faces crowd on your decks
To seize on your hold
And disburden you ?—
What golden mountains will dream down upon you,
And comfort you after your labours,
O beautiful Ship ?
We will wish you good-luck on your starry adventures !
Brave well the seas, and conquer the ravaging winds ;
And in your own time
Come back to us—come back to us—
Come back to the harbour under the hill,
And tell us your story !

Ah, can it be that this paint, this iron,
Shall touch those mythical shores ?

To the Americas !—
O life, O ecstasy !

4. FOWEY.

The little harbour sleeps
Before night.

It is very still :
I can hear the painters
Tumbling in the little boats
Across the water,
On the other side of the harbour.
And I can hear a voice in one of them
Monotonously talking, grumbling . . .
And I can hear little eddies and ripples ;
And the grinding and bumping of little keels;
And a dog barking in the town ;
And laughter,
Far away.

Closer—
The solitary and intermittent
—Splash !—
Of a belated bather
Hidden beyond the rocks,
(I cannot see him),
Cuts through the hour
Like the flash of a sword.

But these are only ripples on the surface of the stillness :
The deeper rhythm of the Silence
Is inviolable.

The little harbour sleeps
Before night.

5. *LAND'S END.*

Crash down upon our bulwarks, O irresistible seas !
 Spill your enormous volume in scarves of piteous foam
 Round the feet of our everlasting habitation,—
 Your surges cannot move it :
 Or your tempests shake it :
 Forever will it rise inviolable above the turmoil of your waters,
 Serene as the throne of God !

O England, England, Island of shadow and cloud !—
 Island of trees,—
 Where the brown fields slope to the woodland,
 And the plough goes over the land
 With the white gulls following after ;
 Where the grass springs sweet in the meadows,
 And the swathes go straight along the fields
 From end to end,
 With a billowy movement, catching the silver light
 From the silver skies ;
 Where the little grey lanes
 Twist creeping in and out among the hedgerows
 Under the elms,
 Beckoning the mind ever more divinely onward,
 Through valley and hollow and coombe,
 To the warm green bosom of the land ;—
 Island of homesteads and farmsteads,
 Deep-set in the great home trees,
 With gable-ends where the white doves cling
 And dreaming clusters of roofs ;
 Island of down-land and corn-land,
 And of little friendly villages
 Flung down, like stars, upon the surface of the hills ;—
 O England, England, island of home and of peace,
 We have lost Thee of late !—

We have not loved Thee enough !
 Praised Thee enough !
 We have followed after bitter gods of our own making :
 We have prayed, marvelling, before strange altars,
 Forgetful of Thee and Thine :
 We have not loved Thee enough !
 Praised thee enough !

Here, in thine endless endurance of wind and of flood ;
 Here, where the clamour of the irresistible waters
 Deadens all else save a sense of thy Power in withstanding them ;
 Here, where the wind tears at thy surfaces
 And furies, withering, over the green caps of thy headlands
 Like a thing demented with hate ;—
 Here do we kneel in endless humility,
 Endless worship and love,—
 Here will we be joined to Thee again,
 England, O England !

Westerley, westerley, sweep the grey smooth breakers multitudinous,—
 Ridge upon ridge,
 Crest upon crest,
 Oncoming, implacable, pitiless,
 Seeming to rise forever and ever on the great slow breath of the sea,—
 Heaving and moaning and splashing,
 Onward they come.
 There is no end to them,
 No rest from them . . .
 They roar over the skells and crags of projecting rock
 At the foot of the cliffs.
 They spill themselves in enormous covertures of creamy foam,
 Gasping and sucking backward with the swell
 Over the spars and wreckage of rock,
 Washing, lapping, gulping,
 Recovering themselves
 To leap with a renewed agony of desire
 Up the throat of the great sleek cliffs
 Embracing them,—
 Enveloping them,—
 Engirdling them with lean and hungry arms,—
 Falling backwards again, helplessly, irresistibly,
 Into the tumult beneath.

Grim pillars of granite,
 Descend in vast steps from the land,
 Flung fearfully down and out into the waters
 From the pent of impregnable shale
 Above and beyond !—

The sea springs at their surfaces,
 Hissing and yearning :
 It gulps insatiate
 Round their caverns and crevices,
 Searching out their secret and inviolable places
 To tear them asunder.
 But they stand fast forever !
 There is no shaking them :
 No removing them :
 Endlessly, they rear their great columns skyward,
 Dreaming out over the waters in the path of the westering sun,
 Patient and proud.

The gulls eddy and wheel round their topmost pinnacles,
 Or plunge shuddering down their vast abysses,
 Ceaselessly calling and crying their pitiful song,
 Which is the song of the sea,
 The despair of the sea,
 The love of the sea for the land
 Scorned and rejected.
 The invisible wind frays itself over their escarpments,
 Or topples, screaming, down their gullies and crevasses,
 Whirling—pouring—eddying—
 Wild with destruction !

But they stand fast forever—
 Pillars of our Hearth,
 Enthroned and abiding !—
 Endlessly they rear their great columns skyward,
 Like the clustering spires of cathedrals,
 Patient and proud.

And above them, and beyond them,—
 Protective, mothering ;
 Seeming to lean over them with vast overshadowing gestures
 of infinite peace ;
 Untroubled and ancient,
 The first great bastions of land rise over the foam :
 Beacon after beacon,
 Promontory after promontory,
 Southward and Northward as far as the eye can see,
 Thrusting their huge humped shoulders

Out over the deep,
 Golden and gleaming and splendid,
 Like lions reclining,—
 The Lions of England forever repelling
 The chaos without.

Ah, there is exultation here !
 And gladness here !

Crash down upon our bulwarks, O irresistible seas !
 Spill your enormous volume in scarves of piteous foam
 Round the feet of our everlasting habitation,—
 Your surges cannot move it :
 Or your tempests shake it :
 Forever will it rise inviolable above the turmoil of your waters,
 Serene as the throne of God !

And we, who have fallen from grace,—
 We, who have wandered away into the desert places unmindful,
 We, who have strayed,—
 Here where the clamour of the tumult of waters
 Deadens all else save a sense of the Power which withstands
 them,—
 Here do we kneel in endless humility,
 Endless worship and love.

We will come back to Thee, O England !
 We will go down into Thee again,
 Feel the deep Love welling up in the heart of Thee,
 And be comforted again
 As a child on the breast of its mother !
 We will go down thy lanes into the very bowels of thy valleys,—
 And the great trees shall close over our heads,
 With their cloudy arms enveloping us,
 Embracing us,
 Folding us ever more deeply down
 Into the dim divine of thine infinite greenery,
 Giving us strength.
 We will claim our life from Thee,
 Our death from Thee,
 For what is our life but the life of thy woods and thy fields,
 Made conscious in Song ?
 And what is our death but the touch of thy frost on our lips
 In the evening,—after the day ?
 We will come back to Thee, O England !—
 We will search out thy holy, peaceful places,

Thy solitary places
 And brood therein,
 At rest with ourselves and with Thee.—
 By the waters of brooks and of streams,
 Where the willows and alders make a mystical, silvery music
 With the rushes beneath :
 By the banks of thine ageless rivers
 So gently flowing with an intimate peace
 Through hayfield, and cornfield, and woodland,
 Under the clouds :
 In thy gardens, dreaming and ancient,
 Where thy flowers are set in their places
 At the knees of great mellowing walls :
 In the little moaning hollow under the hill,
 Full of rustling and whispering
 And creaking of leaves :
 On the hills above,—
 In the valleys beneath,—
 In groves and in woods,—
 In thy nights and thy days—
 In thy seasons and all changes within Thee,
 We will know Thee again !
 Love Thee again !
 Worship Thee again !
 Letting the Spirit in Thee overshadow the spirit in us,
 Cleansing us !—
 Redeeming us !—

We have seen Thee in thy stress and toil,
 O very mother !—
 We have beheld the extremity of thine ageless fingers
 Clutching and warding and staving off the void of the sea,
 Guarding thy sons from the chaos without
 With thy mighty endurance :
 We will return to the warm green bosom of the land,
 Knowing the *strength* of thy peace . . .

Crash down upon our bulwarks, O irresistible seas !
 Spill your enormous volume in scarves of piteous foam
 Round the feet of our everlasting habitation,—
 Your surges cannot move it :
 Or your tempests shake it :
 Forever will it rise inviolable above the turmoil of your waters,
 Serene as the throne of God,—
 England, island of dreams and of infinite peace,—
 England, reclaimed for her sons !



OTHER POEMS.



THE BLACKBIRD. (*To Jehane.*)

Will you remember me when the long days lengthen between us,
 And there is no word, no look, no sign?—
 When the days take to themselves days,
 And the weeks weeks,
 And the season changes, changes,
 With the change in the leaf,
 And the change in the tilth?
 Will there be other laughter in your heart,
 Other thoughts in your mind,
 When the corn's gathered into the barns
 And the team goes a-ploughing?—

And when you come in from the golden ways of the Autumn
 To dream by a golden fire
 At dusk,—
 Will my image flicker awhile in your thoughts
 Like the bickering flames?

Next Spring,
 You will hear the blackbird waken in the thicket:
 His song will come upon you suddenly,
 Like a javelin,
 Piercing your heart . . .
 You will not have time to stop your ears,
 Or put up your hand to your breast,
 His song is too swift:
 It will be upon you in a flash—
 Through you in a flash—
 Past you in a flash—
 But, oh, the things it will leave in its wake,
 The memories, the ecstasies! . . .

Will you remember me then?
 Ah, Love, remember me then!

AT AN EVENING PARTY.

(To B. S.)

Over the heads of the people,
 Listening to the music,
 The great glass chandelier
 Clustered and hung,
 Burning, with its thousand candle-power,
 A furrowing pathway into the brains of the hearers.
 (Rows of them, women and men, shoulder to shoulder,
 Sitting on gold cane chairs,
 Their white moon faces
 Impassive
 Under the glare.)—

Of a sudden the music ceased,
 —A pause between movement and movement—
 A babel of voices . . . some clapping—
 Then you rose and went to the door ;
 And leaning all beautifully back into the room,
 Tremulous in your billowy draperies,
 With your hand on the switch,
 Laughing and calling,
 You turned the great light out.

O wonder !
 Something girlish and joyous in your gesture,
 As you stood laughing there—
 A swift arrowy loveliness,
 Like a bird's,
 Having balance, and rapture, and flight,
 Arrested me :
 Amazed me :
 Pierced me with the sense of eternities in you,
 Undreamed, unguessed.

(Ah, do we not know each other,
 We who have talked together,
 And wondered together ?
 We, whose memories converge at a hundred points,
 Do we not know what to expect of each other
 As we approach in time and space ?—
 How was it then that I saw you,
 Perceived you afresh—
 The glory of you ?)

O moment divine of inspiration and revelation
 O moment of vision—
 These eyes beheld your Immortality ! . .

CLOUDS.

O sun-tipped clouds,
Bearing in your heart the April tears,
That in good time,
Will bring the daffodils to lands I know,
So that under the apple-boughs
All honey-bright the air will be with trumpet-blooms,
Swaying, courtseying, dipping in the breeze,
Making the heart glad with songs of Spring.—
O sun-tipped clouds, with healing in your tears,
I would my grief had such a touch as your's ;—
That it would call forth glory from the heart,
And wonderful glancing joys,
And loveliness ! . .

DEATH'S ALCHEMY.

In Memoriam G. D.

How beautiful are the ways of Death!—
 How soft it comes,
 Touching with quiet hands the wrinkled cheek—
 Smoothing the puckered brow—
 Creeping about the hair in little waves
 Of all unconscious loveliness,
 Instructing it to curl and blossom there,
 About the precincts of the darkened brain,
 In ways most reminiscent, and most dear to us—
 How sweet it comes,
 Closing the tired eyes,
 And playing with soft humour round the mouth,
 Until all Dignity is there that lacked before,
 And man's Himself again.

O youth returned!
 How do the years face back upon themselves
 And Time be shown the charlatan he is,
 When o'er the winter furrow of a face
 The April look creeps back!
 Therefore do we strew lilies round the bed—
 Tall, straight young lilies, symbols of the Spring,
 And make all white where sombre was before,
 Weeping the while.
 Poor foolish human hearts!
 We know not what we do, when most we act
 From custom's wont:
 For youth comes ever to the house of Death,
 And yet we weep, and yet we see him not,
 And yet we strew the bed
 With symbols of the loveliness we feel.

How strange is life that it should so belie
 The truest thing it is!—
 We dream ourselves to be what we are not,
 But Death knows what we are.
 We dream of age, and, lo, the creeping years
 —Deep-printed concepts of our fleeting minds—

Heap on our backs a load of heaviness
 Where no weight is—
 We dream of care, and lo, we agonise ;
 Yea, the shoe pinches, and we wince with pain,
 And cry our troubles to the unwitting air,
 All faint with grief and tears—
 We dream of love, ah yes, we dream of love,
 —We thirst and crave and hunger after love,—
 And in our hearts we *are* the thing we seek,
 But know it not.
 Death knows ; and laughs ;
 And keeps its secret for our latest breath.

O years so full of waywardness and grief,
 Victored at last, fall backward from the mind
 And give the spirit peace, for Death is here !—
 No longer shall your vaunted sovereignty
 Usurp the citadel of consciousness,
 And frown upon the wanton grace of youth
 That else would blossom here !—
 No longer shall your false persuasion build
 A house of dreams about the waking mind
 And call it life ;
 Or longer mock the majesty of God
 With broken back, and wrinkled cheeks,
 And snowy-falling locks !
 Your tyranny is past : then get you gone !
 For all shall be a virgin loveliness
 Unspotted by your touch—as once it was,—
 And the great Timeless Spirit over all
 Be once again
 Supreme !

THE SINGER (*fragment from ULYSSES*)

Through the still night
He sang a known, a venerable song,
—A loved, a known, a venerable song—
Such as on the mellow days of summertime in Greece
The reapers used to chant, as with their scythes
They laid the bearded corn,
And bound and gathered it along the swathes,
Singing of Ceres and Earth's fruitfulness,
Or such as the good-wife told her little sleeping son,
What time she rocked the cradle with her foot,
While her two lovely hands
Fluttered like doves about the snow-soft wool,
Heaped in great piles about her quiet knees—
When the beech-logs blazed on the hearth-stone,
And the old dog slept,
And Tenderness prevailed, a living thing,
In the dim twilight, ere the men came home.

And as he sang.—
Comrades gathered round the watch-fires,
And heart expanded to heart, and speech arose,
Soft whispered speech of home, soft as the night . . .

GLOUCESTER.

Suddenly the Cathedral !
Thrusting its great, dim choiring head amid the stars,
Splendid, aloof,
Supreme above the City --

And I—a water-rat,
Peeping through the tangled stalks of reeds
To see a great Swan throned upon her nest . . .

TO ——

Ah, there is no doubt about *you*—
 You with your dark hair, and upturned eyes,
 And faun's expression—
 You with the wine of life in your veins,
 The joy in your heart.

Colour to colour we are,
 Gesture to gesture :
 And though our minds
 Be divided by immeasurable distances :
 Though we gape at each other
 Across inexpressible vacuities
 Where no thought is,
 What of it,?
 What of it ?—
 Love laughs at the mind. . .

But the physical ?—
 Ah, there is rest and rest between us,
 And fire and fire, at will.
 In the physical all is understood between us,—
 Understood and forgiven beforehand.

Colour to colour we are,
 Gesture to gesture ;
 And when I bend over you,
 And kiss your throat,
 And lips,
 And eyes,
 The tremor of abandonment that goes through your body
 Is the tremor of my own most intimate completion
 As male.

Blessed be you who thus give me the sense of myself !

ESCAPE.

O, this Town!—
Lo, I will take a very swift train
And speed out of the gloom and filth of it all
Into the rich bosom of the country—
Westward ever Westward,
Over the green meadows,
And over the streams—
Westward ever Westward,
Over the dreaming downs
And into the valleys—
Westward ever Westward,
Till the great hills encircle me again,
And take me in their arms,
And give me peace!

THE POET IN THE GARDEN.

As I swing into the garden,
 Home from my walk in the April evening,
 The mellow sunlight of after-tea
 Vanishes—
 And from the fruit-walls,
 And from the lawn,
 And from the daffodils blowing in the flower-beds
 The gold day dies.
 Blue smoke of dampness gathers in the shadows,
 And an unearthly stillness,
 A brooding peace,
 As of things accomplished
 (Innumerable processes of secret unfoldment and blossoming,
 Spirit and matter plastically concurring
 In hidden places,
 One with another,
 Hushed at the approach of night)
 Holds the old garden-close,
 Sanctuary-calm,
 Enthralled.

The long liquid flute
 Of drowsy birds
 Locating themselves and each other
 In the tall, motionless elms,
 And in the lilac under the elms,
 And in the thick-leaved undergrowth
 —Manifold and mysterious—
 Of the shrubbery,
 Is only the echo,
 Image and pattern in sound,
 Of that poised contentment and peace—
 Nature so unerringly finding,
 From her inexhaustible store,
 The perfect symbol.

For a moment I, too, am caught up in that vast overshadowing
 peace.
 I mingle and merge with the earth who am born of the earth :
 I know the far, quiet seas—the forests—the plains—
 The uttermost horizons—
 The brim of the world.
 And as with Nature the birds,
 So with me the rythm of song,
 Instinctive as their's—
 A poem is born in my heart . . .

PRAYER.

Lord God of the oak and the elm,
 And of the grey-green fields,
 And the silver skies :
 Lord God of the birds and the clouds,
 And the rustling of leaves—

Ah, Green Bough in my heart burgeoning, blossoming,
 All the days of my youth have been spent in the courts of
 Thy praise !

I have loved Thee, worshipped Thee, adored Thee :
 I have uncovered my heart where Thou liest hid,
 That men might behold Thine infinite healing and mercy :
 Thou hast been my Refuge and Strength.

Be with me still,
 When my life creeps into the shadows :
 When Age has consumed my Endeavour,
 And Ardour has flown :
 When the hills are dreamy with April
 And I scarce can see them for dimness :
 When the children laugh and call in the lane,
 And I cannot go out to them . . .

Be with me still :
 Shake down Thy dusky dew over the fading landscape of
 my day ;
 And when the darkness comes
 Set Thou Thy stars and constellations
 In the heavens of my peace,
 That still through the watches of the night,
 I may behold Thee, worship Thee, adore Thee,—
 And in the Great Dawn
 Be made one with Thee,
 O Lord my God, my Lover, and my Friend.

1

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles**

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 562 707 0

PR
6043
V719i

